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THE
LOUISE E. BETTENS FUND
IN
THE WILLIAM HAYES FOGG ART MUSEUM
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK, May 1, 1918.

DEAR MR. FORBES:

It is false economy to purchase a work of art because it is cheap. And no work of art should be purchased, unless it is in fact a work of art.

A water color bought from Winslow Homer for \$300, is, at that price, just as valuable, *as a work of art*, as when \$3,000 is paid for it at a later time.

Fashion, or scarcity of his paintings in the market, may lead to the payment of very high prices for his works. But, *as works of art*, they have not changed in value.

The Dealer in works of art is not, in any proper sense, a patron of art. He is a merchant, and to patronize him, is to benefit the merchant, and only very remotely, the Artist.

Fewer artists would live in straitened circumstances and die poor, if the real Patrons of art—Museums of Art, for instance—would deal directly with the Artist, and shun the Dealer.

How was it in all of the great ages of Art? In the Age of Pericles? In the Italian Renaissance? Cannot our age do as they did?

I know that it requires courage to do this, but Harvard College can afford to be a leader in a movement that looks to helping the Artist by buying from him, and should, as far as possible, have nothing to do with Dealers, whose main purpose is money making.

Am I asking the impossible? I think not.

I thank you for your valuable letter of April 29th ult.

Sincerely,

EDWARD D. BETTENS.

Mr. EDWARD W. FORBES,
Fogg Art Museum.



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NEW YORK, May 7, 1918.

DEAR TAYLOR:

Recently there was some correspondence between Mr. Edward W. Forbes, the Director of the Fogg Art Museum, and me, looking to a purchase of some painting by the late Winslow Homer, with the income of the Louise E. Bettens Fund (the accrued interest of which amounted to \$1,200). On approval, Messrs. M. Knoedler & Co. sent to the Fogg Art Museum the following Winslow Homer paintings:

"Fishing in the Adirondacks", water color	price, \$2,000
"Moonlight on Water", unfinished oil painting	" 1,500
"Rise to a Fly", water color.....	" 1,200
Total	\$4,700

I had not seen these paintings, but I was willing to add \$1,300 to the \$1,200 of the accrued income of the Louise E. Bettens Fund, provided:

(1) That all three paintings could be purchased for \$2,500.

(2) That all three paintings were approved by Mr. Forbes, Dr. Denman Ross, and the other advisers of Mr. Forbes.

"Fishing in the Adirondacks" having been approved by Mr. Forbes and his advisers, and the negotiation for its purchase having been turned over to me, it was purchased May 7th, 1918, for \$1,500—I advancing the needed \$300.

My personal views as to the high prices paid for paintings of dead artists are stated in a letter from me to Mr. Forbes dated May 1, 1918, a copy of which is enclosed.

Sincerely,

EDWARD D. BETTENS.

THOMAS FENTON TAYLOR, Esq.,
Class of 1875,
Harvard College.

NEW YORK, May 10, 1918.

DEAR MR. FORBES:

The senior partner of M. Knoedler & Co. is Mr. Rowland Knoedler. It was his Nephew who, through me, sold to the Fogg Art Museum, last Tuesday, for \$1,500, the water color "Fishing in the Adirondacks" by Winslow Homer.

This Nephew told me that he remembered taking part in an Exhibition, at Knoedler's, of 25 of Winslow Homer's paintings, during the life-time of Mr. Homer. The Exhibition was well-advertised, he said, and the prices asked were from \$150 to about \$300, but only five were sold.

Last Tuesday "Fishing in the Adirondacks," by Winslow Homer, sold for \$1,500. Some one has told me that the Worcester Art Museum recently paid \$20,000 for an oil painting by Winslow Homer.

"Why is it," I asked this Nephew of Mr. Rowland Knoedler, "that the Art Museums do not, as a rule, buy paintings direct from the Artists?"

He shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and said, "Lack of courage".

"Did not", I continued, "Mr. William T. Evans and Mr. Hearn buy American paintings direct from the Artists? The Evans collection of American paintings, a gift to the United States, is in the National Gallery at Washington, D. C. The Hearn Collection of American paintings is in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art."

"Yes," said this Nephew, "they did buy direct from the Artists, but they bought for themselves. Directors of Museums do not buy for themselves individually, but for the Museums, and that makes them timid and unwilling to rely on their own judgment."

M. Knoedler & Co. are entitled to handsome commissions in effecting sales of paintings because their reputation and standing are high.

But one fact is clear so far as Winslow Homer is concerned. He lived and died in straitened circumstances and had difficulty in selling his paintings for as much as \$250 a painting. Now that he is dead, \$1,500 to \$2,000 is asked for some

of his paintings and, if I have been correctly informed, the Worcester Art Museum paid \$20,000 for one of his oil paintings, and M. Knoedler & Co. get commissions on sales by them greater than Winslow Homer, in his lifetime, could get for the paintings themselves!

“Are there not now alive any Winslow Homers, neglected at present, but whose works will be eagerly sought for after the Artists are dead?” I asked this Nephew.

“Yes, there are,” he replied.

Sincerely,

EDWARD D. BETTENS.

MR. EDWARD W. FORBES,
Fogg Art Museum.

The Fogg Art Museum controls a sum of money amounting, at present, to Twenty Thousand Dollars, as a principal fund, known as

THE LOUISE E. BETTENS FUND

ESTABLISHED BY HER CHILDREN

The income of this fund is to be used to encourage and advance Painting by citizens of the United States, including women, as well as men.

On account of that Fund, Harvard College has bought, and now owns, the following paintings, which are now on exhibition in the Fogg Art Museum:

Lake O'Hara, an oil painting, by John Singer Sargent.

Bridle Path—Tahiti, a water color, by John La Farge.

Sunday Morning, Domberg, a water color, by James McNeil Whistler.

Monmouth, before James II, refusing to reveal the names of his accomplices, an unfinished oil painting, by John Singleton Copley.

Fishing in the Adirondacks, a water color, by Winslow Homer.



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